

FEATURE – NATIONAL HORTICULTURE SURVEY SHOWS A MIXED BAG

INTRO: A new survey from the U-S Department of Agriculture shows a mixed bag for horticulture production. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:33)

HORTICULTURE PRODUCTION IS BECOMING MORE DIVERSE BUT ITS GROWTH LAGS BEHIND THE REST OF AGRICULTURE. THAT'S FROM THE RECENTLY RELEASED CENSUS OF HORTICULTURE FROM THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE.

Joe Prusacki, USDA NASS: They showed income of eleven point seven billion dollars. Well that seems like a lot. Well compare that, though, with the census we did ten years ago with the horticulture specialties it was only a ten percent increase and you compare that to the rest of agriculture during that same time frame, the rest of agriculture saw a sixty percent increase.

SINCE NINETEEN NINETY EIGHT, FOOD CROPS GROWN UNDER PROTECTION SHOWED AN ALMOST ONE HUNDRED FIFTY PERCENT JUMP IN SALES TO MORE THAN HALF A BILLION DOLLARS.

Joe Prusacki, USDA NASS: Well you can kind of tie that to maybe organics, and commodities that people believe to be more healthy than overall general commodities.

HOWEVER, AREAS LIKE FOLIAGE PLANTS AND CUT FLOWERS EXPERIENCED DOWNTURNS IN THE LAST ELEVEN YEARS. PRUSACKI SAYS CUT FLOWERS FACED INCREASED COMPETITION.

Joe Prusacki, USDA NASS: The cut flowers that's mainly competition from South America. So it's just a whole different structure from ten years ago.

AND PRUSACKI SAYS FOLIAGE PLANT SALES SUFFERED FROM THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN.

Joe Prusacki, USDA NASS: It's tied more closely with the economy with the downturn in housing and things like that where just not as much is being expended for the look and feel of the house on the outside.

IN WASHINGTON D-C FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE I'M BOB ELLISON.